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KENTUCKY FARMERS INCREASE WINTER WHEAT ACREAGE

Kentucky farmers seeded an estimated 480,000 acres to **winter wheat** during the fall of 2010 for harvest in 2011 according to the Kentucky Field Office of the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. This was up 90,000 acres from the 2010 crop. Winter wheat seeded in Kentucky is utilized for grain, hay, silage and as a cover crop prior to setting tobacco. Strong prices for winter wheat and early harvest of corn and soybeans contributed to the increase in acreage. Seeding of winter wheat started in late September. Seeding progressed rapidly during October and was nearly complete by November 1.

U.S. winter wheat planted area for harvest in 2011 was estimated at 41.0 million acres, up 10 percent from 2010 but 5 percent below 2009. Seeding began last August and during September was slightly behind the 5-year average. During October, seeding progressed slightly ahead of the 5-year average. More acres were seeded this year due to the early row crop harvest and higher prices. The winter wheat crop condition at the end of November was rated 47 percent good to excellent compared with 63 percent the previous year.

Soft Red Winter wheat area is about 7.76 million acres, up 47 percent from last year. Kentucky seeds soft red winter wheat. Large acreage increases from last year were estimated in all growing States. Record or near record low acreages occurred in many States last year due to the late row crop harvest during the fall of 2009. The early row crop harvest and dry conditions this fall allowed many of those acres to be seeded. Farmers in several States reported trouble finding enough seed due to the large increase in acres seeded.

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